on religious grounds are also reprehensible. Taliban's edict justifies the action that the international community has taken in imposing sanctions on the Taliban through resolutions such as UNSCR-1333.

Government has also raised the issue of Taliban's decree in its interaction with members of the international community, bilaterally as well as in the UN. Consequently, there has been widespread condemnation by the international community of the Taliban's decree, including from the UN Secretary General, European Union and the US.

The matter will be appropriately taken up by the Government in the 58th session of the Commission on Human Rights in March/April, 2002.

Depicting Sikkim as a Nation on Chinese Website

547. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item under the caption China lists Sikkim as Asian Nation on website which appeared in the Asian Age on 14th April, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken at diplomatic channels to keep the record straight?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) We have taken up with the Chinese side the issue of their incorrect depiction of Sikkim. We have pointed out that their position on Sikkim, an issue related to India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, is not in conformity with their own stated objective of seeking goodwill and friendship with India, and is not in keeping with the principles of Panchsheel. It gives rise to misgivings in the minds of the Indian people, Parliament and Government and adversely affects the process of building trust and confidence. We have also conveyed to the Chinese side that we expect them to acknowldege the reality of Sikkim as an integral part of India. This would help promote development of friendly, cooperative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations between our two countries.